

Resolution Would Create Joint Committee on Underage Drinking

According to various sources of research, the median age at which children begin drinking in our state is 12.7 years old. Research also shows that the highest prevalence of binge and heavy drinking in recent years was for young adults between 18 and 25 years old, and that teens and parents are not well informed about the consequences of underage drinking.

This week, I filed a resolution that would combat these problems by forming a Joint Interim Committee on Underage Drinking. The committee will study the current attempts against underage drinking and their effectiveness. The members will make a report to the General Assembly after the study has been completed and offer recommendations on their findings.

The committee will be comprised of eighteen members: four Senators and four Representatives, with at least half of each house belonging to the minority party; two representatives of the medical community; two representatives of law enforcement; two representatives of the commercial alcoholic beverage industry; two parents of teenage children; and two students between the ages of 18 and 20 years old.

The statistics about underage drinking in our state are shocking, and the consequences behind it are harmful. From a legal, social or health standpoint, underage drinking has negative results. It may lead children into situations involving academic failure, dysfunctional family relationships, subsequent use of controlled substances, sexual activity and violence, and even depression and suicide. Growing up in our current society is hard enough for children, we must ensure that efforts are made to keep them safe from these problems. The joint interim committee will make sure that these efforts are effectively keeping our children safe from alcohol-related dangers.

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